



CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM DESIGN PROGRESS REPORT

The USAID South Africa Democracy and Governance Team has just approved an eight-year, approximately \$9 million civil society strengthening program. The program seeks to promote a vision that was developed through extensive consultations with civil society stakeholders and in-depth analysis provided by a team of one U.S. and four South African experts.

As part of USAID's commitment to provide continuing updates about its new civil society activities, we present our fifth progress report featuring a summary of the Civil Society Strengthening Program (CSSP) planning document. The full document can be found at WWW.SN.APC.ORG/USAIDSA. If you are unable to access our website, we'd be happy to fax or mail you a copy upon request.

Program Summary

The Civil Society Strengthening Program marks a significant shift in USAID's support for civil society. We are now moving away from funding the programs of a limited number of individual civil society organizations (CSOs) towards a more integrated sector approach. The main goal of this new approach is to strengthen strategic CSO-government partnerships for service delivery and policy implementation. To accomplish this, the USAID program will provide assistance in support of three principal program elements, namely:

- 1) Improved CSO-government capacity for partnering
- 2) Increased access to better information
- 3) An enhanced enabling environment for partnerships

Following is a brief description of each element followed by a list of corresponding illustrative activities that USAID/South Africa hopes to support.

Element 1: CSO-government capacity for partnering improved

For there to be successful and sustainable partnerships, each partner must have the capacity to carry out its agreed role in the partnership. As South African CSOs transition from struggle mode to developmental actor, and as CSO funding sources diminish, the sustainability of local organizations increasingly depends upon their ability to design and deliver programs relevant to the national developmental agenda.

To strengthen CSO-government capacity for partnering, USAID/South Africa would like to support the design and implementation of three illustrative activities that include:

- **Strengthen the organizational development capacity of the sector (formerly referred to as the "fast track.")**
- **Provide Institutional support to the NDA to strengthen its ability to carry out its mandates.**
- **Support joint CSO-government pilot efforts in policy development and monitoring.**

Element 2: Access to better information increased

The recent wave of democratic transitions worldwide has contributed to emerging research on the critical determinants of democratic consolidation. There is general agreement among democracy experts that one such determinant is a healthy and vibrant civil society. Better, more well-researched information about civil society is a fundamental prerequisite to understanding its partnering role in democratic development, economic development, creating innovation, speeding service delivery, and establishing successful partnerships. USAID/South Africa anticipates funding activities designed to strengthen civil society, government, donor, and public understanding across a range of issues where data is lacking.

To increase access to better information for purposes of partnering, USAID/South Africa would like to support the design/implementation of four illustrative activities:

- **Support the development of an index measuring the health of South African civil society.**
- **Provide institutional support to the Department of Welfare to implement the NPO Act.**
- **Promote the dissemination of information required by government and CSOs to facilitate partnerships.**
- **Support research about the sector, its role in partnerships, and its role in the broader process of economic and democratic development.**

Element 3: Enabling environment for partnerships enhanced

A successful partnership requires a conducive policy environment in which it can be conceived and flourish. Both the South African government and civil society recognize this fact, and there is currently an ongoing constructive dialogue between the two. This dialogue will continue until enactment or amendment of current legislation. Some of the key policy issues that still require a final decision, and over which negotiation continues, include: the definition of NGO eligibility, criteria for eligibility, and administrative systems for monitoring compliance with legislation.

To promote a more enabling environment for partnerships, USAID/South Africa would like to support the design and implementation of two illustrative activities which include:

- **Support the current tax policy dialogue.**
- **Provide technical assistance to the government for policy analysis leading to a legislative framework that enables CSO-government partnership.**

All the activities identified at this point in time are illustrative and need further in-depth design given the dynamic nature of the civil society sector in South Africa. We wish to note a few points regarding implementation of this program:

Use of a Project Implementation Agent (PIA)

The implementation of this program represents a significant shift from past models employed by USAID. While USAID will retain overall program planning, reporting, and management functions of the program, it will outsource much of the activity design, solicitation, award, administration, and technical oversight work to Creative Associates (CREA) through a contract.

CREA, in turn, will carry out the technical design and oversight of activities through a project implementation agent (PIA). USAID believes that a PIA -- comprised of various contracted South African civil society experts -- is required to bring technical leadership and cohesion to a very diverse program that will reflect the heterogeneous nature of civil society in the country.

Use of a Program Reference Group (PRG)

A top priority for the program is the establishment of a Program Reference Group (PRG). This PRG will be comprised of civil society leaders that can serve as intellectual partners in program implementation. The PRG will act as a "sounding board" to provide the necessary advice, guidance, and feedback to USAID in implementing the Civil Society Strengthening Program (CSSP). USAID, in collaboration with the PIA and PRG, will develop a simple performance monitoring system to gauge the outcomes/results of program activities.

Program Implementation Timeline

In selecting and sequencing the illustrative activities described above, USAID and the consultant team examined each activity's potential impact, its priority ranking by CSOs consulted, its level of readiness for start-up, and the amount of additional work required to define its activities. Additionally, a major consideration driving sequencing of activities was available funding.

The following timeline is what we are currently thinking about in terms of activity start-up and duration dates. Again, this is for illustrative purposes and is subject to change as implementation begins.

RESULT/ACTIVITY	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Institutional support to the NDA								
Partnership models for monitoring policy implementation								
Strengthen organizational development capacity of CS sector								
Support development and application of an index on CSOs								
Support implementation of NPO Act								
Support establishment of information dissemination								
Support a research and development network								
Support tax policy dialogue								
Technical assistance to government on legislative frameworks								

Start-Up Activities

While USAID has already begun funding several small activities, the majority of the activities listed above require further in-depth design. The design and implementation will involve the services of the Program Implementation Agent, the Program Reference Group, USAID, and CREA. To provide CSO stakeholders with more detailed information about the program design and implementation activities, we will continue to send this *Newsflash* out on a more regular basis.

Procurement Process

As part of its competitive process, USAID/South Africa will award program grants and contracts through a competitive process. Once the programs are more fully designed, USAID and/or CREA will advertise upcoming "Requests for Proposals/Applications" in the local and national weekly newspapers (e.g. *Mail and Guardian*, *Sunday Times*, *Star*, etc.) as well as on the SANGONET web page on the internet. Also, through this *Newsflash*, we will seek to alert stakeholders to important opportunities and deadlines.

We are interested in gathering feedback about our new program, as well as information about what organizations are doing to promote the strengthening of the civil society

sector. To do this, we encourage you to send us whatever thoughts you may have by the means most convenient to you. Thanks!

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